

# BRFSS Brief

Number 1103

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an annual statewide telephone survey of adults developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by the New York State Department of Health. The BRFSS is designed to provide information on behaviors, risk factors, and utilization of preventive services related to the leading causes of chronic and infectious diseases, disability, injury, and death among the noninstitutionalized, civilian population aged 18 years and older.

## Seat Belt Use

New York State Adults 2008

### Introduction

In the United States, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among US residents aged 18-34 and account for approximately 15 percent of all non-fatal injuries treated in US emergency departments. Motor vehicles are the method of transportation for 90 percent of all trips taken in the US and the majority of people killed or injured while traveling are drivers or passengers of a motor vehicle.<sup>1</sup> In New York State (NYS), approximately 636 adult drivers or passengers (persons aged 18 years and older) died in motor vehicle crashes in 2008.<sup>2</sup>

Seat belt use reduces the risk of death and serious injury from a motor vehicle crash by approximately 45 percent and 50 percent, respectively.<sup>1</sup> During a motor vehicle crash, adults who do not use seat belts are 20 times more likely to die and 4 times more likely

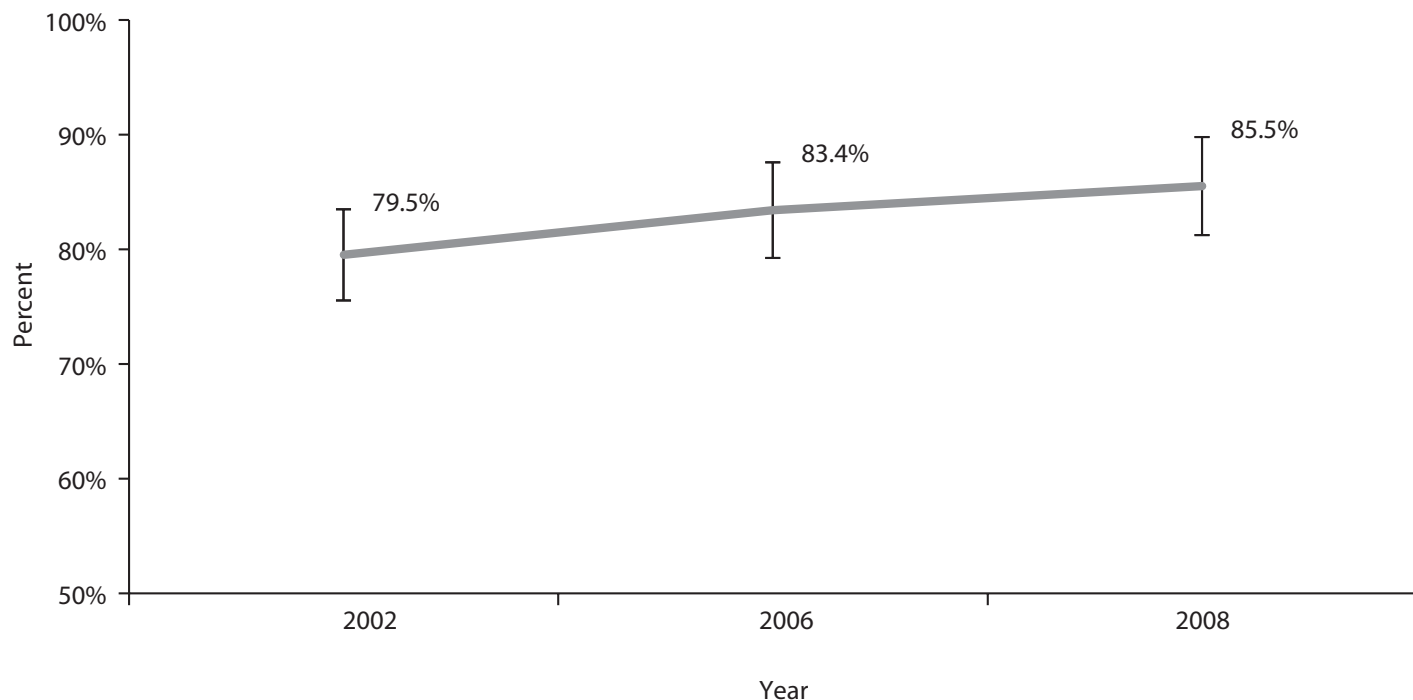
to require hospitalization than adults who do use seat belts, costing an average of \$22,000 more per year in hospital charges than adults wearing a seat belt. In addition, adults who do not wear seat belts are three times more likely to suffer a traumatic brain injury as a result of a motor vehicle crash.<sup>2</sup>

In 2008, approximately 86 percent of adults in NYS and 85 percent of adults in the US reported always wearing a seat belt while driving or riding in a car. Primary seat belt enforcement laws, such as those in NYS, and enhanced enforcement of these laws have been shown to increase seat belt use and decrease death rates.<sup>1</sup> Buckling up is one of the simplest and most effective actions individuals can take to lower their risk of death or serious injury from a motor vehicle crash.

### BRFSS Questions

1. How often do you use seat belts when you drive or ride in a car?

## Percentage\* of New York State adults who always use a seat belt when driving or riding in a car, by BRFSS year\*\*

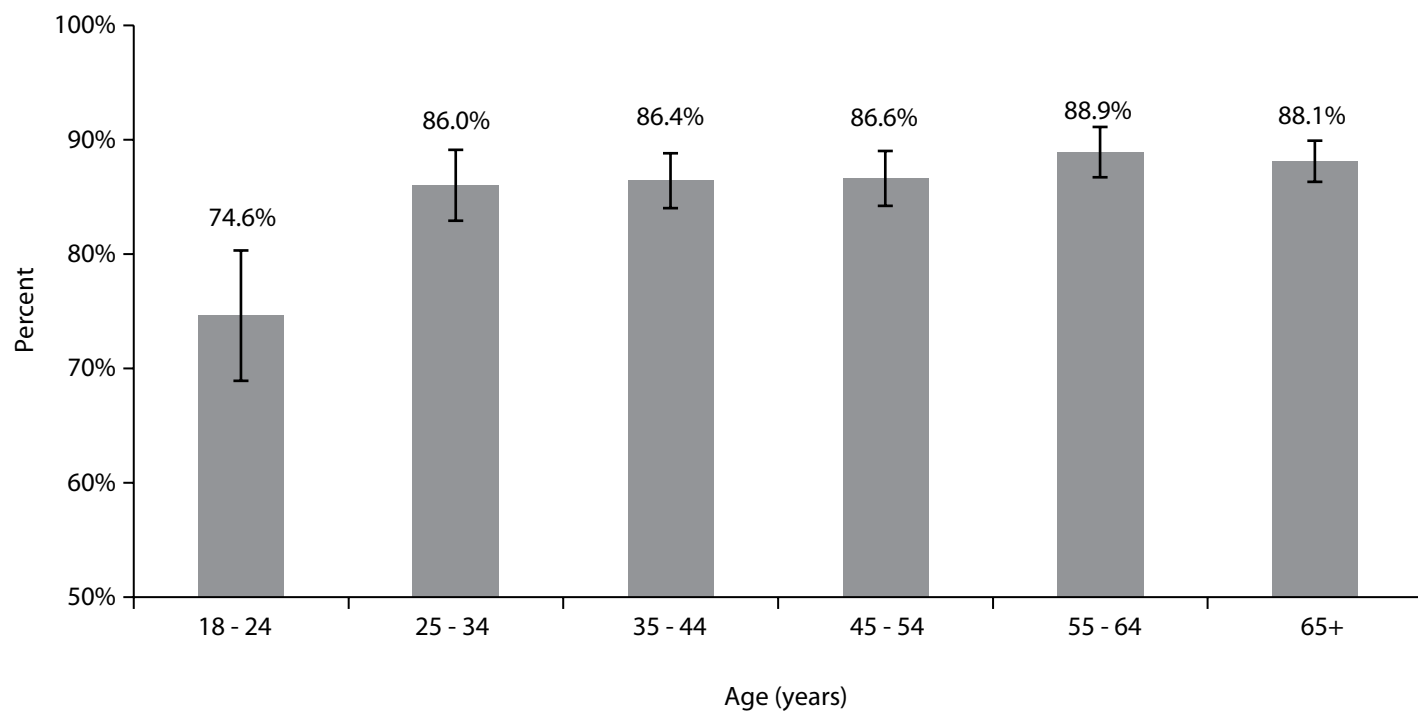


Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

\*Percentages are weighted to NYS population each survey year, but not age-adjusted.

\*\* Data not collected for years 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2007

## Percentage of New York State adults who always use a seat belt when driving or riding in a car, by age, 2008



Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

## New York State adults who always use a seat belt when driving or riding in a car, by selected characteristics, BRFSS 2008

	% <sup>a</sup>	95% CI <sup>a</sup>
<b>New York State (NYS)</b> [n=7,782]	85.5	84.3-86.7
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	82.2	80.2-84.2
Female	88.5	87.1-89.9
<b>Age (years)</b>		
18-24	74.6	68.9-80.3
25-34	86.0	82.9-89.1
35-44	86.4	84.0-88.8
45-54	86.6	84.4-88.8
55-64	88.9	86.7-91.1
65+	88.1	86.3-89.9
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
White non-Hispanic	86.3	85.1-87.5
Black non-Hispanic	87.1	83.6-90.6
Hispanic	81.2	76.9-85.5
Other non-Hispanic	85.3	80.0-90.6
<b>Annual household income</b>		
<\$15,000	79.7	74.8-84.6
\$15,000-\$24,999	82.8	79.1-86.5
\$25,000-\$34,999	86.6	83.1-90.1
\$35,00-\$49,999	86.0	83.1-88.9
\$50,000-\$74,999	85.8	82.9-88.7
\$75,000 and greater	86.8	84.8-88.8
<b>Educational attainment</b>		
Less than high school (HS)	81.0	76.1-85.9
High school or GED	85.2	82.8-87.6
Some Post-H.S.	84.5	82.1-86.9
College graduate	87.5	85.7-89.3

<sup>a</sup>% = weighted percentage; CI = confidence interval

## References

1. "Vital Signs: Nonfatal, Motor Vehicle-Occupant Injuries (2009) and Seat Belt Use (2008) Among Adults – United States." MMWR Vol. 59, Nos 51 & 52
2. New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Injury Prevention: Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System

## Program Contributions

New York State Department of Health  
Bureau of Injury Prevention  
(518) 473-1143  
injury@health.state.ny.us  
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## Order Information

### Copies may be obtained by contacting:

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